

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 200977
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAA-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 PM-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /044 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:MDRAPER:CF

APPROVED BY NEA:MDRAPER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 200977

JIDDA PASS AMBASSADOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PORG, LE, JO, SY

SUBJECT: NAAA VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST

1. AS SOME ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ARAB AMERICANS (NAAA) HAD BEEN ON VERGE OF SENDING DELEGATION TO VISIT HUSSEIN, ASSAD AND SARKIS, BUT CANCELLED TRIP ON EVE OF DEPARTURE AUGUST 7 OWING TO SECURITY CONDITIONS IN BEIRUT. THEY HAD CALLED US FOR ADVICE ON SECURITY CONDITIONS AND WE SAID THEY WERE BAD AND THAT WE WERE ADVISING ALL AMERICAN TRAVELERS TO BEIRUT NOT TO GO UNLESS THEY HAD URGENT AND PRESSING BUSINESS. WE ASKED WHETHER NAAA DELEGATION WOULD GO TO DAMASCUS AND AMMAN AND NAAA REP SAID THAT IT REALLY WASN'T WORTHWHILE SINCE THE FOCUS

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OF THEIR VISIT WAS BEIRUT. HE ADDED THAT THE DELEGATION WAS THINKING OF ATTEMPTING A MEDIATOR'S EFFORT OF ITS OWN.

2. OUR GUESS THAT THIS NAAA DECISION REACHED THE SYRIANS IN A DISTORTED FORM WAS CONFIRMED IN SUBSEQUENT TALKS WHICH WE HAD WITH LEBANESE AMBASSADOR AND SYRIAN CHARGE. LATTER HAD BEEN ASSURED BY NAAA DELEGATION THAT

THERE WAS NO RPT NO USG POLITICAL ADVICE IN THE NAAA
DECISION.

3. WE SECURED CONFIRMATION FROM SYRIAN CHARGE THAT HE
PERSONALLY BELIEVED THERE WAS NO U.S. POLITICAL ADVICE
IN THE DECISION, ONLY ADVICE RE SECURITY CONDITIONS, AND
HAD SO REPORTED TO DAMASCUS, BUT HE ADDED THAT HE SUS-
PECTED THIS WOULD NOT BE CONVINCING TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

4. HE NOTED THAT DELEGATION FROM THE "PROTESTANT GATHERING"
HAD VISITED BEIRUT ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO AND HAD GOTTEN A
GOOD DEAL OF PUBLICITY. HE WONDERED WHETHER THE DEPART-
MENT HAD GIVEN SIMILAR TRAVEL ADVICE ON SECURITY CONDI-
TIONS IN BEIRUT TO THIS GROUP, AND WE SAID WE CERTAINLY
WOULD HAVE DONE SO IF THEY HAD ASKED FOR SUCH ADVICE ON
THE SAME DAY THE NAAA DID, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO DEPART-
MENT CONTACT WITH THIS GROUP. NEWSOM

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NNN

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To: DAMASCUS AMMAN MULTIPLE
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